United Nations A/C.1/59/PV.3

General Assembly
Fifty-ninth session
Official Records

First Committee
3rd meeting
Tuesday, 5 October 2004, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. De Alba ..... (Mexico)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Organization of work

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Before we continue the general debate, I should like to make some comments and proposals regarding the organization of our meetings. As I pointed out yesterday, I do not consider it appropriate to convene meetings of the Committee unless there are enough speakers to enable us to make appropriate use of available time and conference services. Despite our having agreed on the desirability of having a rolling list of speakers, the way in which delegations have placed their names on the speakers' list is in line with the practices of the past: they have inscribed their names to speak on specific dates and have not shown great willingness to adapt to the new format of a rolling list.

At present we still have some meetings with only five or six speakers scheduled. I therefore propose to cancel tomorrow's meeting. I propose also that the Secretariat keep two lists, one for delegations willing to make their statements on Thursday or, if additional time is necessary, on Friday, and the second for delegations that absolutely cannot make their statements until next week. The latter list would be for Monday; if additional time is needed, it would continue on Tuesday or even on Wednesday.

There is still time for delegations to add their names to the list. The deadline, as agreed, is tomorrow, Wednesday, 6 October, at 6 p.m. I believe that with the flexibility of two lists we will be able to decide on keeping a rolling list, in two segments, for the remainder of the session. I hope that next session we will be able to have one single rolling list from the very beginning.

What we cannot do is to give a precise date for each presentation. A rolling list, as I understand it, means that if a delegation cannot speak when its turn comes, it is moved to the end of the list unless some kind of understanding can be reached with another delegation to exchange places. Note that I do not intend to shorten the general debate. My intention is to work on the basis of a rolling list so that we can make full use of the time available to the Committee.

I am not asking that this start tomorrow, Wednesday, because I understand that some delegations are still preparing their statements. I know too that some heads of delegation will be arriving at the weekend and will not be able to speak until next week. I understand those concerns, which is why I have proposed this format, which I believe is flexible enough.

May I take it that the members of the Committee agree to this proposal?

It was so decided.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank members for their flexibility and cooperation. I believe that this is something that was needed and will help us to improve our use of time in the Committee. I repeat that my intention is to save time not for the sake of

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

04-53507 (E)

saving time but in order to use it in the best possible way: making progress towards the objectives of the Committee and having a more detailed, specialized, focused discussion on the more complicated issues.

With tomorrow's meeting cancelled, it would be very useful for delegations that are circulating draft resolutions to hold consultations on their texts. That would give small delegations a better opportunity to participate, and would enable us to begin the consultations early, thus broadening support for those draft resolutions. I understand that the Secretariat been trying to find rooms for delegations wishing to hold consultations. I myself will be using tomorrow to hold consultations on the next stages of the work of the Committee.

In that way we will be saving the Organization's resources while we make use of our time to conduct consultations at this early stage.

It will not take all morning to hear all the speakers on the list for today's meeting, so with the concurrence of the Bureau I have invited the Secretary of the Fifth Committee and an official from the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts to address the Committee in connection with agenda item 109, "Programme planning". Many members are already acquainted with the problems set before the Committee on Programme and Coordination, so I consider this to be a good opportunity for the Secretary of the Fifth Committee to explain them in greater depth so that we can start our consultations on the matter.

Agenda items 57 to 72 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Labbé (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since this is my delegation's first statement at this session, I should like first to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the Committee secretariat.

My delegation associates itself fully with the statement made yesterday by the delegation of Brazil on behalf of the Rio Group. Chile will comment only on the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation: the Hague Code of Conduct. The Hague Code of Conduct is coming to the end of its second year of formal activity. The process of universalization conducted by subscribing States has increased membership to 115 States. The subscribing States come from all political and regional groups, including approximately 50 members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The Code is a political initiative whose purpose is to contribute positively to international security and to strengthen disarmament and arms control mechanisms and treaties. The Code was negotiated in a transparent way and is open to all United Nations Members; its multilateral orientation and aims are thus clear. We are convinced of the risks posed by the indiscriminate proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. That is why we strive for global security through politically binding measures such as restraint in the development, testing and deployment of such missiles, and also through confidence-building and transparency measures that include annual reports and pre-launch notification.

At the same time, subscribing States monitor the assistance given to the space-launch vehicle and ballistic missile programmes that could be associated with the development or acquisition of weapons of mass destruction in contravention of international law. While we recognize, as has been established by General Assembly resolution 51/122 of 13 December 1996, that every State has the right to participate in the benefits of outer space for peaceful purposes, we believe that in the process of reaping such benefits they should not contribute to the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

To attain those goals, subscribing States have made progress in refining their tools and methods. We held our second intersessional meeting in Vienna in June and have accepted Austria's kind offer to host the third regular meeting on 17 and 18 November.

As mandated by the subscribing States, the Chilean Chairman of the Code of Conduct reported to the Secretary-General last November on the activities of the Code. The report (A/58/595) refers, among other things, to a strategy of cooperation with the United Nations system that includes an invitation to the Secretariat to participate as a special observer in the third regular meeting of the subscribing States. The Chairman of the Code is carrying out consultations on submitting a draft resolution to the First Committee this year, with the aim of formalizing a functional link with the United Nations. As we said in 2003, the Code

is a political response to the threat posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. But we do not consider it to be the only possible response. As a political undertaking it can coexist with other initiatives and endeavours with the same purpose.

At the end of October, with the cooperation of Italy and Canada, Chile is organizing a regional outreach seminar in Santiago at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences. Its goal is to promote the Code's universalization within the region that began the development of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The seminar will be one of the last outreach activities organized under the Chilean chairmanship. In November, in musical Vienna, we shall be passing the baton to the Philippines, which has accepted the responsibility of leading the subscribing States in their third year of consolidation.

Finally, I take this opportunity once again to renew our open invitation to all countries that have not yet subscribed to the Code to become a part of our effort: all countries that are genuinely committed to the cause of international peace and security have a place among us.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly. With your rich experience and outstanding diplomatic skills you will surely guide this session of the Committee to success. I assure you and the other members of the Bureau of the full cooperation and support of the Chinese delegation. I should also like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Jarmo Sareva for his excellent work as Chairman of the Committee at the last session.

In the twenty-first century, economic globalization has been broadening under the influence of the new scientific and technological revolution. Against that backdrop, people-to-people contacts and exchanges are growing increasingly frequent. Dialogue and cooperation among countries are being further enhanced. Regional integration is accelerating. A variety of regional security mechanisms are displaying unprecedented dynamism. Pursuing peace, seeking cooperation and promoting development have become the main themes of our times. However, we are confronted with quite a few potential dangers and challenges on the road to peace and development.

Many ambiguous and unpredictable factors exist in the security arena. Violence, strife and regional conflicts caused by traditional security factors such as ethnic, religious and territorial disputes are far from being eradicated. Non-traditional security threats are on the rise. Terrorist activities are ever more rampant: from New York's World Trade Center to North Ossetia, the alarm bell of terrorist threats has tolled loudly time and again. The danger of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is growing and poses a great threat to peace. Transnational crime, epidemics, environmental pollution and the growing gap between the rich and the poor are all constraints on the development of humankind. Faced with such threats and challenges, no country can manage alone or stand aloof. To build lasting peace and universal security, it is imperative for us to foster a new security concept centred on equality, mutual trust, mutual benefit and cooperation. Whatever difficulties or challenges may lie ahead, we shall follow the path of enhancing mutual trust through dialogue, the negotiated settlement of disputes and promoting development through cooperation.

Multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts are an indispensable part of the international security framework and an important facet of implementing the new security concept. Therefore we are duty-bound to promote the multilateral arms control and disarmament process and improve the international non-proliferation machinery on the basis of the universal participation of all countries on an equal footing.

Currently we are seeing a mixed picture in the international non-proliferation field. On the one hand, international consensus on non-proliferation has been further enhanced and positive progress has been made. Libya has renounced its weapons of mass destruction and has joined the international non-proliferation regime. Nuclear issues related to both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran have been put on track for a political solution. The unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) further exemplifies international cooperation and resolve on non-proliferation matters.

We are also confronted with a number of new challenges. With the expansion of globalization and new developments in science and technology, traditional export control mechanisms are inadequate to cope with increasingly sophisticated covert proliferation activities. The exposure of the

international nuclear smuggling network demonstrated that the original country-targeted non-proliferation norms were obviously fraught with defects. The risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists is a real threat and needs to be seriously addressed. Some countries and international organizations have come up with new proposals to strengthen multilateral non-proliferation regimes, particularly the nuclear non-proliferation regime. China supports all efforts to bolster the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to strengthen the safeguards and verification role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to bridge the gaps in current regimes through multilateral cooperation. We are ready for discussions with all parties concerned in an open-minded and serious manner.

The complexity of non-proliferation issues calls for a comprehensive approach addressing both the symptoms and the root causes. In that regard China advocates the following. First, we should strive to promote common security for all countries so as to eliminate the motivation to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Secondly, we should address proliferation issues through cooperation and dialogue and using political and diplomatic means. Thirdly, we should vigorously promote multilateralism and strive to improve the existing international non-proliferation regimes. Fourthly, we should ensure the impartiality, rationality and legality of non-proliferation measures. And fifthly, we should maintain a balance between non-proliferation and peaceful uses: it takes both dams and dredges to counter floods. Similarly, it is important to guarantee the right to the peaceful uses of science and technology — so long as the goal of non-proliferation is ensured.

In recent years China has made fruitful efforts to strengthen export controls. We have put in place a comprehensive and effective export control system. The system has adopted international standards and practices, such as a licensing system and end-user certification, list control and the catchall principle. The principles, scope and practices of our export controls are basically identical to international standards. Efforts have also been made to improve the relevant support mechanisms for export controls. We have set up an inter-agency emergency coordination mechanism, a unique export registration system and a technical expert panel on export controls. We have developed a custom harmonized system (HS) code for controlling items. In addition, the Government has taken a variety of measures to enhance our export control regulations and policies, as well as awareness within industry. Most important of all, we have all along been rigorous in law enforcement. Violations of laws and regulations have been investigated and the punitive measures made public. China attaches importance to international cooperation in the area of export controls. We have been actively developing relations with the multilateral export control mechanisms and engaging in close exchanges and cooperation on export controls with other countries. We have joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group and are willing to join the Missile Technology Control Regime. China is also willing to continue dialogue and cooperation with mechanisms such as the Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement and with other countries so we can all draw upon one another's experience and improve export controls.

While strengthening international non-proliferation efforts, we should not neglect the importance of advancing the process of arms control and disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. China advocates the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons and never shies away from its responsibilities with respect to nuclear disarmament. China has undertaken unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or against nuclear-weapon-free zones. China urges all nuclear-weapon States to make the same commitment and to conclude a legally binding international instrument to that end. In the meantime, we call upon the countries bearing special responsibility for nuclear disarmament to further substantially and irreversibly reduce their nuclear arsenals, thus creating favourable conditions for complete nuclear disarmament.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of milestone significance for promoting nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. China firmly supports the CTBT and remains committed to the moratorium on nuclear tests. The Chinese Government wishes to see the entry into force of the CTBT and is actively promoting consideration and ratification of the Treaty by the National People's Congress in accordance with due legal procedures. The seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT will be convened next year. Reviewing all aspects of

the Treaty and making the appropriate recommendations will promote the three main objectives of the Treaty, ensure its vitality and enhance its effectiveness and universality. We hope that all countries will show good faith and political will and will work together to make the Conference a success.

Beginning the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament at an early date is of crucial importance for promoting the multilateral arms control and non-proliferation process. At present, differences over the agenda reflect divergent views on international disarmament priorities. In order to break the current stalemate, the Conference's programme of work should address the concerns of all parties in a comprehensive and balanced manner. Here, China has made tireless efforts. We have announced our readiness to accept the proposal made by the representatives of Algeria, Belgium, Chile, Colombia and Sweden — the five ambassadors' proposal — and have an open mind with respect to addressing new issues in the Conference on Disarmament. We hope that the parties will be able to reach consensus on a programme of work at an early date on the basis of the five ambassadors' proposal.

With respect to ensuring the peaceful use of outer space in the common interest of mankind, the current situation highlights the necessity and urgency of preventing the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space. Here, China and Russia have jointly submitted several working papers with a view to clarifying our positions and promoting common understanding. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament can begin substantive work on this subject as soon as possible with a view to negotiating international legal instruments in this area.

A fissile material cut-off treaty would contribute to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. China supports the early negotiation of a treaty in the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work. China is now seriously studying the proposal to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty without verification.

China has always devoted itself to the comprehensive and effective implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC). Last month the Second Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Asia, jointly sponsored by China and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), was held in Beijing and achieved positive results. For years, chemical weapons abandoned by Japan in China have consistently caused human casualties. Such tragic events again underscore the importance and urgency of the early and complete elimination of abandoned Japanese chemical weapons on Chinese territory. China urges Japan to make every effort to start the destruction process at an early date.

The threat of bioterrorism is on the rise, and the issue of biosecurity is increasingly prominent. It is thus necessary to continue multilateral talks on measures to strengthen the effectiveness of the Biological Weapons Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). China will continue its active participation in that process and will make every effort to promote the comprehensive and effective implementation of the BWC.

China highly values the role of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) in addressing humanitarian concerns. We have already initiated preparations for ratifying the Protocol on explosive remnants of war and will continue to participate actively in the work of the CCW Group of Governmental Experts.

With regard to the issue of mines, other than anti-personnel landmines, China is in favour of seeking an appropriate solution that would strike a balance between humanitarian concerns and security needs and that would take account of countries' differing economic and technical capabilities. In recent years, China has been an active participant in international demining cooperation. We have provided mine-affected countries with demining assistance, including funding, equipment and training. Last April in Kunming, China and the Australian network of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines co-sponsored a workshop on humanitarian landmine and unexploded ordnance clearance technology and cooperation. The workshop promoted exchanges and cooperation between donor countries and mine-affected countries. We will continue to give as much support as we can to international mine-clearance operations. We are also

ready to intensify exchanges and cooperation with all interested countries and international organizations in this regard.

China supports and has participated constructively in the negotiation of an international instrument on marking and tracing illicit small arms and light weapons. We hope that the parties will continue to work on the basis of the report adopted by the Group of Governmental Experts on the feasibility of developing an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons (A/58/138), with a view to achieving positive results. China also attaches importance to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. We are making intensive preparations for ratifying the Protocol and wish to see its early entry into force.

In view of the mounting threat of terrorism, it is necessary to strengthen the management of man-portable air-defence systems. China is ready to work with other parties to further explore rational and effective measures to prevent the use of such weaponry by terrorists.

Information security affects not only national economies and people's livelihoods, but also international security and stability. China supports the further consideration of that issue by the group of governmental experts on information security with a view to making concrete proposals.

For years the First Committee of the General Assembly, as the international forum most responsible for security and disarmament, has played a role of historic significance in promoting international disarmament and enhancing international security. In today's changing international situation there is room to improve the efficiency and working methods of the First Committee. Members have submitted various proposals in that regard. China is ready for open-minded discussions with all parties. Reform of the First Committee is a complicated issue with many elements. It is thus unrealistic to expect to reach the goal in one move. We need patience. Based on our principles, we would like to make a number of suggestions. First, the nature of the First Committee as the most representative international forum on security and disarmament should be maintained. Reform efforts should focus on tapping the Committee's potential, enhancing its role and improving its efficiency. Secondly, democratic and universal participation in the work of the Committee should not be jeopardized. We must ensure that every party has the opportunity to express its views on issues of concern. Thirdly, reform of the Committee should proceed in parallel with reform of the United Nations as a whole and of other disarmament mechanisms. And finally, reform measures should be feasible and should reflect the concerns of all parties.

In the new century the developing international situation has not only posed serious challenges but has also opened up bright prospects. Together with other countries, we are ready to advance the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process, thus making our proper contribution to creating a peaceful and safer world.

Mr. D'Alotto (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Brazil spoke on behalf of the Rio Group yesterday and will also do so on behalf of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and associated countries in the thematic debate. The delegation of Argentina fully associates itself with those statements. For that reason, and for the sake of brevity, my delegation will limit itself to making the following comments.

We continue to be concerned at the continuing risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which threatens the internal security of States and global stability. In the new millennium, the highest priority must be given to renouncing weapons of mass destruction. We reiterate once again that the challenge posed by terrorism as a new and genuine international threat adds a new dimension to the issue of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. That new dimension requires concrete and innovative action by the international community that embraces all situations of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We need to work towards full implementation of disarmament and non-proliferation instruments and to ensure their strengthening and universalization.

We await with interest the deliberations on increasing the effectiveness of the working methods of the First Committee. We have made known our position on this important issue and have read with

great interest the opinions expressed by other delegations. We have also identified major points of agreement on which we expect to continue working. We highlight in particular the need to follow up the implementation of the resolutions we adopt.

We have decided to submit a draft resolution entitled "Information on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms". We do so convinced that dialogue and mutual understanding are the basis on which to generate the political will we require. We thank in advance all delegations that have expressed their desire to join in sponsoring the draft resolution, and we invite all delegations to join this initiative.

Mr. Chairman, you can count on the full cooperation of our delegation during the Committee's session so that we may attain the expected results.

Mr. Skotnikov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): In today's rapidly evolving world, which is facing new challenges and threats, it is all the more important that the international community take concerted action in maintaining security and stability. The Russian Federation consistently advocates that the United Nations play the central role in carrying out this task, one which is vital for humanity. The United Nations has the capacity to do it; as President Putin of the Russian Federation has said,

> "an adequate response to the most serious threats of the twenty-first century — international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and regional conflicts — can only be provided by the united efforts of the world community relying on the tools of the United Nations and international law".

One of the most important areas for a joint effort by the international community is that of non-proliferation, arms reduction and disarmament. The non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), their means of delivery and related materials and technologies is particularly urgent in the current environment. Negative trends in this area are on the increase, and joint efforts by all nations are needed to reverse them. The endeavour should be aimed at both strengthening the relevant multilateral instruments and mechanisms and at taking effective national measures. The Group of Eight set out its ideas in that regard in Action Plan on Non-Proliferation, adopted in June at the Sea Island summit.

The timeliness of taking effective non-proliferation measures today is dictated also by the threat of WMDs falling into the hands of terrorists. With a view to removing that threat, the Security Council, with Russia's extremely active participation, formulated and adopted its resolution 1540 (2004). The resolution lays a solid foundation for action against WMD black markets, which are the most likely channels through which terrorists could obtain such weapons and related materials. It is necessary now to ensure the resolution's complete implementation by all States. We also stress that the tasks of countering WMD proliferation and combating terrorism should be carried out in strict conformity with the norms of international law and taking into account the legitimate security and development interests of all States.

The central role in strengthening the regime of nuclear non-proliferation lies with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Russia strictly and consistently implements its obligations and initiatives in the sphere of nuclear disarmament, particularly within the framework of article VI of the Treaty. Our practical deeds are there to prove it. Russia submitted detailed information in that respect to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. We believe that a step-by-step advance towards comprehensive and total nuclear disarmament, based on a comprehensive approach, is needed, and that no unrealistic benchmarks or objectives should be proposed. Nuclear disarmament cannot be conducted in isolation from the situation with respect to other kinds of weapons and without taking into account political developments in the world, particularly in Europe, including the evolution and enlargement of military-political alliances.

We attach great importance to the success of the 2005 NPT Review Conference. Regrettably, the results of the most recent session of the Preparatory Committee inspire no optimism. It is important that by the 2005 Conference all Treaty members understand that the main thing that unites them is the need to preserve the NPT and to enhance, on the basis of the Treaty, the effectiveness of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Russia views the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as a key instrument for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Its significance is evidenced by the second Joint Ministerial Statement of

support for the CTBT launched during this session, on 23 September 2004. We call on all countries that have not yet signed and ratified the CTBT to do so as soon as possible, first and foremost those States whose ratification is needed for the Treaty to enter into force. It is also important that until that time the moratorium on nuclear-weapons-test explosions and all other nuclear explosions continue.

In his address to the present session of the General Assembly (see A/59/PV.8), the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Russia once again drew attention to the need to keep outer space free of weapons. As members know, in the interests of achieving that aim, Russia and China, with a number of other States as co-authors, submitted to the Conference on Disarmament a draft text on basic elements of a comprehensive agreement on preventing the weaponization of outer space. The draft sets out the following fundamental obligations: not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying weapons of any kind; not to emplace such weapons on celestial bodies; not to station such weapons in outer space in any other manner; and not to have recourse to the threat or use of force against outer-space objects. The conceptual discussion of this issue has advanced over the past year. We hope that the work of the Conference on Disarmament will be unblocked and its ad hoc committee on outer space will be re-established to begin substantive multilateral discussion of a draft agreement on the matter.

Russia is pursuing a steady course of preventing an arms race in outer space. Let us recall that as far back as 1983 the Soviet Union assumed an obligation not to be the first to station any kind of anti-satellite weapons in outer space. We remain committed to that obligation. Moreover, we will not be the first to place any weapons in outer space. We call on all nations with an outer-space potential to follow suit, which will make it possible to maintain a peaceful outer space. We are confident that this would benefit all nations, without exception.

We believe that missile non-proliferation is another priority. Regrettably, the Group of Governmental Experts on the issue of missiles in all its aspects, which had been working this year on a draft report of the Secretary-General on missiles, failed to make progress because of serious differences in the positions of a number of States. Nevertheless, the United Nations should continue a substantive discussion of missile issues.

It is very important that all countries meet their commitments under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), primarily those related to the destruction of such weapons. Russia supports efforts aimed at making the CWC universal and at establishing national mechanisms for its implementation.

We continue to advocate the strengthening of the regime of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction by creating a verification mechanism for the Treaty. Such a mechanism could help prevent hazardous biological materials and technologies from spreading and from falling into the hands of terrorists. We must work to make the Convention universal. From our perspective, the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/32, submitted by Russia, has made a good start. This is the first experience of a joint analysis with a view to working out an agreed approach in this area. It is important that the General Assembly at this session adopt another resolution on agenda item 60, "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security", so to reaffirm the general framework and direction of the Group's activities. It is hoped that, drawing on previous experience, such a draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

We have a positive assessment of the work of the Geneva-based Group of Governmental Experts within the framework of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). The adoption of the new Protocol V to the CCW, aimed at reducing the humanitarian aftermath of the explosive remnants of war, has proved to be a significant event. It is now important for all States to complete all national ratification procedures with respect to the new Protocol so as to ensure its prompt entry into force.

We underscore once again the leading role of the United Nations in shaping a holistic approach to problems regarding small arms and light weapons. In conformity with General Assembly resolution 58/241, the first session of the Open-Ended Working Group to

Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, held last June, proceeded to elaborate a draft international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. Russia will continue its constructive participation in the activities of the Group; the Group could be in a position to put forward specific proposals for the 2006 review conference on small arms and light weapons.

Progress in promoting security and disarmament at the regional level can undoubtedly have a positive impact on global efforts in that sphere. In July 2004, Russia joined three other States — Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine — in ratifying the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). It envisages a considerable adjustment in the limitations system and other CFE provisions taking into account changes in the political and military situation on the continent. It also opens up the possibility for wider membership of the Treaty. The Agreement should make a considerable contribution to European security. The prompt entry into force of the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty would be in the interests of all parties. It would fulfil the commitment "to move forward expeditiously to facilitate completion of national ratification procedures" set out in the Final Act of the 1999 Conference of the States Parties to the CFE Treaty. Russia sees no constructive alternative to the expeditious entry into force of the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty.

Regrettably, we have not succeeded in launching the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament, and the Disarmament Commission has been stalled as well. The main reason, again, is a lack of political will to seek compromise. Nevertheless, a number of important substantive discussions of agenda items have been held this year, albeit in an informal format. Those discussions showed that the Conference has a great deal of work before it and revealed the willingness of most participants to see the Conference get down to business at last. We hope that efforts aimed at bringing positions closer with a view to agreeing on the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament, will be stepped up and will lead to the long-awaited breakthrough.

Russia remains open to further discussions of ways to improve the efficiency of the First Committee's work. With that in mind, it is especially important to take into account the specific nature of its tasks and purview, to have respect for the rights of member States and to ensure that our approach is linked with the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly as a whole.

Mr. Illeak (Turkey): I should like first to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption to the chairmanship of the First Committee and to extend our best wishes for the successful completion of our work under your able guidance.

A new security environment has come about in the post-cold-war period. In this new environment, the single threat emanating from one bloc and directed at the other has been replaced by multifarious, uncountable, non-conventional, asymmetric risks and threats. Ethnic and religious fundamentalism, organized crime, trafficking in human beings, drugs and weapons, environmental disasters, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) have become daily security issues.

The attacks of 11 September 2001 demonstrated the tenuousness of the new strategic environment. Governments and world public opinion have realized that terrorism could be devastating to our societies if it were equipped with weapons of mass destruction. The horror of dirty bombs has started to haunt our Governments. That, in turn, increased our vigilance on the proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery.

In principle, Turkey favours global, overall disarmament. In the light of that ideal, it supports all efforts to maintain international security through arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. My country, which is situated close to regions posing high risks of proliferation, takes a firm stand against the proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery. It is important to maintain and, if need be, strengthen the legal framework and redefine and expand the basic parameters of international instruments and export control regimes. Turkey is a party to all instruments and regimes in the field of WMDs and gives its full support to the Proliferation Security Initiative.

We consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. Therefore, Turkey calls on those countries that remain outside the Treaty to accede to it and on those that have

lapsed in their implementation fully to comply with their Treaty obligations.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) international safeguards system is an essential part of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. We call upon all States that have not yet done so to conclude additional protocols with the IAEA, and we support all initiatives to strengthen conditions for the supply of highly sensitive nuclear equipment and technology. In that vein, Turkey supports the proposal to make signing an additional protocol a condition of supply.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a measure against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as envisaged in article VII of the NPT. Turkey supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones wherever feasible. Assurance of the total absence of nuclear weapons and other WMDs in a particular geographical area would have direct, positive implications for the security concerns of States in that region. In this context, Turkey supports the idea of creating a WMD-free zone in the Middle East and encourages all efforts towards a common regional understanding on this project, with the participation of all parties concerned.

We view the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as an important element of the international nuclear safeguards regime. Therefore, we call upon the remaining 11 States to become parties to the Treaty without delay in order to make way for the entry into force of the CTBT sooner rather than later.

Turkey attaches special importance to the negotiation of a non-discriminatory and universal treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The banning of the production of such material would strengthen nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and thus international security. In the Conference on Disarmament it is essential to start negotiations on the basis of the report of the special coordinator on this item (CD/1299) and the mandate outlined therein, of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons also pose a significant threat to peace and security as well as to the social and economic development of many communities and countries. It is generally believed that, on average, 500,000 people are killed each year with small arms. According to the *Small Arms Survey 2004*, among these, 300,000 people are said to die in armed conflicts and 200,000 in events not attributed to conflict situations. We will continue actively to contribute to all efforts within the United Nations and other forums to foster international cooperation and the evolution of effective norms and rules to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Turkey, cognizant of the dangers posed by small arms and light weapons, together with Australia and Argentina, is submitting a draft resolution on man-portable air-defence systems. Turkey holds the view that the international community must work together to avoid such technologically advanced small arms and light weapons from falling into the wrong hands. I am confident that the draft resolution will have the benefit of the full support of the Committee.

In addition to the threats posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, we are fully conscious of the human suffering and the casualties caused by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. Turkey, in a joint action with Greece, became a party to the Ottawa Convention on 1 March 2004. But mine clearance activities have been implemented in Turkey since 1998, and it is planned that the work to clear all deployed mines will be completed by 2014, in line with our commitments arising from the Convention. Furthermore, we have initiated consultations with our neighbours in order to start a demining process on our borders.

Mr. Bar (Israel), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

As a sponsor of General Assembly resolution 58/41, Turkey fully shares the objective of improving the effectiveness of the working methods of the First Committee in line with the threats that have become more apparent for the international community. The current international security environment is increasingly defined by risks and threats of international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, regional instability and conflict, organized crime, and extremism of all kinds. Streamlining the work of the Main Committees is an important dimension of United Nations reform, which we support. All member States have a stake in this process. It would be useful to put behind us the disagreements on the modalities and to begin focusing on structural and administrative matters

aimed at pragmatic results. Establishing trust, enhancing our common understanding and taking stock of the experience gained from this restructuring exercise should be the guiding elements at this stage.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Belarus congratulates Ambassador De Alba on his election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. He can count on our support and cooperation in his activities.

The world has not become more secure or calmer in the past year. The threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and of their falling into the hands of terrorists and terrorist organizations capable of using them against civilians is still a sword of Damocles for society. Every day, scores of people are the victims of anti-personnel landmines and of small arms and light weapons. We are confident that the only way to solve the problems lies in the multilateral approach and depends upon the efforts of the entire international community. Today's problems also require that the central role of the United Nations and the coordination of its actions with regional organizations be strengthened. Unfortunately, the First Committee remains the only United Nations forum in the area of international security, disarmament and non-proliferation with a complete agenda and with the capacity for taking decisions of principle. Neither the Disarmament Commission nor the Conference on Disarmament has been able to reach consensus on its agenda.

As a State that lays stress on the role of those bodies in strengthening international security, Belarus cannot fail to be concerned by that situation. We are convinced that their potential has not been exhausted and that all we need is the political will of all countries interested in the true consolidation of the central role of the United Nations in ensuring peace and security.

Belarus welcomes the active role of the Security Council in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We are ready to cooperate fully with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Council resolution 1540 (2004). In view of today's international security situation and of the real threat that terrorists will build and use so-called dirty bombs, the Republic of Belarus intends to make its contribution to the international community's efforts. We are convinced that General Assembly resolution 57/50, entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons" and initiated by Belarus, is a complement to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and is aimed at reducing the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Belarus also welcomes the Proliferation Security Initiative and shares its objectives. In conformity with our national legislation, we are ready to cooperate with the States participating in the Proliferation Security Initiative in taking active measures to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. At the same time, we emphasize that all activities aimed at preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems should be based on the multilateral approach and must not undermine the international community's confidence in the methods and mechanisms developed within the framework of the current non-proliferation regimes and the relevant international structures.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the most important instrument in this sphere, providing the international community with a consistent programme of action in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Despite the absence of coordinated substantive recommendations by the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, we consider the Conference to be a real opportunity for the international community to overcome inertia and take a step forward towards reach the goals identified in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference.

Belarus stands for the earliest possible entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We call upon all States that are not parties to the CTBT to accede to it without delay.

One of the most important issues is the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. The Conference on Disarmament must proceed with consultations on this problem. The issue of the military use of outer space must also be the subject of an international legal regime, particularly with respect to banning the deployment of offensive weapons in space.

The Republic of Belarus pursues a responsible and consistent foreign policy aimed at fulfilling its commitments in the sphere of international security, disarmament and non-proliferation. As one of the

States that has adopted the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation — the Hague Code of Conduct — Belarus stands for the establishment of comprehensive cooperation between the Code and the United Nations.

We attach primary importance to the fulfilment of national obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. In compliance with the Convention, our country must destroy its landmine stockpiles within four years. Belarus requires considerable financial and technological resources to ensure the elimination of more than 4 million anti-personnel mines inherited after the breakup of the Soviet Union. In this connection we appeal to Governments and international governmental and non-governmental organizations to provide technical, technological and financial assistance to Belarus in its efforts to eliminate its landmine stockpiles.

Belarus advocates the expansion of transparency measures in armaments and regularly submits data to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We also submit information about the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/24 V, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects".

Our delegation supports the activity of the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Belarus attaches special importance to developing confidence-building measures at regional and bilateral levels; this issue is one of the priorities of our foreign policy. As a result of active cooperation with neighbouring countries, Belarus has set up what it calls a belt of good-neighbourliness along its borders. Agreements on complementary confidence- and security-building measures were concluded in 2004 with Latvia and Poland. We view those agreements as a real contribution to consolidating regional and European security systems.

We are carefully considering proposals made by a number of States with respect to reform of the First Committee. We must decide on a multilateral basis on measures to improve the work of the Committee and to make it more effective, a goal which we support. Like other delegations, we express the hope that this process can be synchronized with overall reform of the United Nations.

In conclusion, our delegation would like to xpress the hope that the international community will develop reliable mechanisms for countering new risks and threats. For its part, the Republic of Belarus will continue to be an active participant in the process.

Mr. Tekle (Eritrea): The Eritrean delegation wishes to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador De Alba on his election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. Allow me also to express appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, for his introductory statement.

It was believed that the end of the cold war and its replacement by an evolving new international order would create a new security environment propitious for cooperation between erstwhile adversaries to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities of that new order. Indeed, some progress was made in the right direction. It is disappointing, however, that the threat to peace and security has increased rather than decreased. Traditional threats to peace are being overwhelmed by new forms of threat, such as terrorism. The traditional actors — States — are being overshadowed by non-territorial and faceless non-State actors, including terrorists, warlords, drug-lords and other lawless transnational operators. Nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction have not been eliminated or even meaningfully reduced, and the destruction caused by small arms and other conventional weapons and by landmines has also been horrendously disastrous in its destabilizing effects on States — politically, economically and socially.

Peace and security are threatened not only by nuclear weapons. Other weapons of mass destruction, including in particular chemical and biological weapons, also pose a great threat to the international security environment, especially with the emergence of new advanced technologies that are increasingly available and that readily facilitate the transport and proliferation of such weapons. This is particularly worrisome in the age of rampant terrorism. Terrorism is the scourge of our times. In the little more than a decade of its independent existence, Eritrea has been

attacked several times by terrorist groups whose mindless acts have killed citizens and foreign visitors alike. The most recent attack took place during the celebration of the eleventh anniversary of our independence in the provincial capital of Barentu and another town, Tesseney. The villains were from a neighbouring country. Other similar attacks in other towns were foiled in time. The internationalization of terror coupled, along with the easy availability of weapons — all kinds of weapons — and advances in the methods of transport and proliferation, has made the elimination of terrorism and of the weapons it can access a matter of urgent priority.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons in many regions of the developing world, particularly Africa, has made those weapons a real threat to peace, security and stability. Their immensely destructive effects are made evident by the scars of war and conflict left in many regions of Africa, particularly the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa, as well as in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The Eritrean Government is fully cognizant of the need for regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation to terminate the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. To that end it has consistently supported all Intergovernmental Authority on Development initiatives and programmes in the Horn of Africa. It has also continued to hold consultations with like-minded States in the region.

The Horn of Africa is one region that has been greatly infested by landmines and unexploded ordnance, which continue to wreak havoc on the livelihood of our people long after the end of conflict. Those nefarious weapons have claimed, and continue to claim, numerous victims every year in spite of the great effort made to clear them. They have had a baneful effect on reconstruction efforts and development programmes. The Government of Eritrea is creating safety nets to protect the vulnerable members of society, including children and the elderly, from the adverse consequences of landmines and unexploded ordnance in a long-term strategy to undertake a comprehensive programme to address the humanitarian consequences of Ethiopian aggression.

There is now near-universal agreement that the international community can meet the challenges of the times, including traditional and new threats to peace, security and stability, only through multilateralism. It is also readily accepted that the United Nations — a strengthened, revitalized and reformed United Nations — remains an indispensable instrument in humanity's quest for disarmament, the destruction of weapons of mass destruction, the termination of the threat posed to developing countries by small arms and light weapons and an end the scourge of terrorism and similar phenomena.

The Eritrean delegation shares the concern expressed by previous speakers that the role of multilateralism in disarmament and peace and security matters is decreasing and the view that only multilateralism — especially when under the auspices of the United Nations — can provide credibility and legitimacy. It is therefore imperative to promote multilateralism and to ensure the primacy of the role of the United Nations. Multilateralism must be bolstered by the democratization of international relations, the promotion of the rule of law, the rejection of the logic of force and respect for the Charter and the sanctity of treaty agreements.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, to congratulate Ambassador De Alba on his election to the chairmanship of this important Committee. We are confident that his vast diplomatic experience and skills will enhance our deliberations on disarmament and international security. We wish him and the other members of the Bureau every success. I wish also to thank the Chairman of the Committee at the fifty-eighth session and the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and his Office for their commendable efforts to develop new mechanisms to foster international cooperation in the fields of disarmament and international peace and security.

In view of their nature, their significance and their direct relationship to the question of the maintenance of regional and international peace and security, items under consideration in this important Committee reflect some of the most vital issues on the General Assembly's agenda at the fifty-ninth session. Without addressing them, we will be unable to reap the desired benefits of stability, security, globalization and sustainable development. The rapid international changes of the past decade were accompanied by dangerous security threats which have led in one way or another to insecurity and instability, to an increase in violence and terrorism and to the spread of conflicts regionally and within nations, afflicting millions of people.

Neighbouring countries and other States are also drawn in to such conflicts. We must understand the significant human, financial and environmental losses caused by the threats to security and the huge quantities and varied types of weapons used in these conflicts and the consequent difficulties that post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction entail. Such resources could have been used to promote the goals and programmes of development and the welfare of the people. We must improve our common understanding of the underlying causes of armed conflict and existing threats. We should strengthen the role of disarmament in stopping and preventing conflicts in order to create a world free from violence and fear, based on the principles of confidence, tolerance and solidarity among countries and peoples. We are of the firm view that stability and just peace in areas of tension and conflict, especially in the Arab Gulf region and in neighbouring countries, will not be attained while some countries carry out nuclear tests and hasten to acquire, transfer, produce and stockpile nuclear and fissile materials on the pretext of preventive security. That has led to a clear strategic and military imbalance in those regions.

We should adopt a common approach to settle conflicts and disputes by peaceful and legal means. States should abide by their obligations and responsibilities enshrined in the Charter, international law and the international conventions and legal arrangements regulating international relations, particularly those calling for mutual respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States, non-interference in their internal affairs, rejection of the use of force and the settlement of their disputes through peaceful negotiations.

Despite the fact that the cold war has come to an end, there has been regression in the process of putting an end to international confrontations, which in most cases involve a wide-ranging strategic arms race and a nuclear threat. This is reflected in the latest statistics, which show that global military expenditure on the production and stockpiling of such weapons has increased by 5 per cent in the past year. That runs counter to the Millennium Development Goals and to the commitments undertaken by States at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It also runs counter to the practical steps taken by the Conference to enhance and strengthen the role of the Disarmament Commission and to oblige nuclear-weapon States to comply with their obligations as provided in the treaties and protocols on disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Those States should reduce military expenditure and reallocate the resources to development. Similarly, non-nuclear States pursuing the acquisition of these weapons are urged to reconsider their positions and to exercise self-control. In that connection, we call for a serious and binding international instrument providing safeguards to States that possess neither nuclear weapons nor other weapons of mass destruction. We also call for the development of specialized mechanisms to follow up and monitor the gradual elimination of those weapons, including the establishment of an international agency authorized to negotiate a multilateral treaty prohibiting the production of fissile materials for the purposes of manufacturing nuclear weapons.

The United Arab Emirates, which has acceded to a number of treaties promoting the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons with the aim of enhancing their universality, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention, believes that the establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is a critical factor in easing tension and disputes and reducing regional armaments. We therefore reiterate our call for the establishment of a zone free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and the Arab Gulf. We urge Israel, the only state in the region that has not acceded to the NPT, to do so and to dismantle all its dangerous nuclear facilities after subjecting them to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions and with the decisions taken at the second NPT Review Conference, held in 2000. We appeal to all States to suspend scientific and financial assistance to Israel that is used in developing its nuclear facilities, which threaten efforts to achieve peace and security in the Middle East.

In conclusion, we are of the view that worldwide comprehensive disarmament requires the rationalization and reform of the working methods of the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission and the development of effective international mechanisms to regulate States' acquisition, production

and stockpiling of advanced weapons, with a view to creating a stable regional and international environment free from all threats and where peaceful coexistence, security, welfare and prosperity prevail.

Mr. Faessler (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Let me begin by congratulating Ambassador De Alba on his election to the chairmanship of the Committee and by assuring him of my delegation's full support. Mexico's commitment in the area of arms control and disarmament, as well as his personal experience in multilateral diplomacy, will undoubtedly prove to be significant assets in ensuring the success of our work.

The objective of our work in the First Committee is to meet the major challenges in the field of arms control and disarmament. Besides nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation we should mention the problem of terrorist groups acquiring weapons of mass destruction and the challenges posed by certain conventional weapons which kill thousands every year.

As a number of delegations observed yesterday, the First Committee is the ideal mechanism for international cooperation in the field of arms control and disarmament. We should not underestimate the importance of continuing our activity in the framework of multilateral security based on international law and providing for effective verification measures.

Our first task is to improve the First Committee's working methods. Here, my delegation supports the Chairman's proposal to implement without delay certain measures to bring about practical improvements in our work, taking into account the proposals contained in General Assembly resolution 58/136. In particular, we welcome the Chairman's proposal to conduct an interactive exchange of views on the work ahead and on the priorities to be set.

We are concerned at the meagre progress in the sphere of weapons of mass destruction. We must recognize that the total elimination of those weapons remains a distant goal. But there are some measures which can be implemented without delay and which should allow us to approach that objective.

The first, and the most urgent, measure is to respect existing commitments. In this vein we note with satisfaction that Libya has halted in toto its weapons of mass destruction programme. Inter alia, my delegation calls on Iran to respect all the resolutions adopted on 18 September by the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Furthermore, we call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon all military nuclear programmes; here, we support all efforts to find a diplomatic solution to nuclear questions on the Korean peninsula.

The second important measure is to increase our efforts to achieve the universalization of all agreements in the field of weapons of mass destruction. We call on those countries that have not yet done so to ratify without delay the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction.

The third measure is, without delay, to start negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a ban of the production of fissile materials for military purposes. My country would like all members of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on the programme of work at the beginning of next year, which would finally allow substantive work to start on this issue.

The Chairman returned to the Chair.

The picture is less disheartening with respect to conventional weapons. In the field of small arms and light weapons, there has been substantial progress with respect to the implementation of the Programme of Action, and negotiations started this year in New York on an international instrument on marking and tracing. My colleague Ambassador Anton Thalmann, who is chairing the negotiations, is planning informal consultations on 20 October, at the margins of the First Committee's session. Last November, the States parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) succeeded in adopting the fifth Protocol, on explosive remnants of war. Those efforts must continue; my country is committed to actively chairing the group of military experts formed to minimize the impact of those arms.

Finally, the first Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,

Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which will take place in Nairobi in November, will be an opportunity both to welcome the important progress achieved since the entry into force of the Convention and to renew our commitment to a world free of anti-personnel mines. An important goal for my country will be the universalization of the Convention and the respect of its provisions, including by non-State actors.

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Sir, I should like to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the current session of the General Assembly. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

We also wish to thank the delegation of Brazil for the detailed statement it made on behalf of the Rio Group. While we fully support that statement, my delegation believes it would be timely to make additional observations on some of the items that we consider to be pertinent, as well as on the overall panorama in the sphere of disarmament and international security. We will, however, refrain from addressing priority agenda issues, even though much remains to be done on them.

Once again, the First Committee is meeting in an atmosphere of uncertainty in the sphere of international security. We have witnessed a series of acts of terrorism that, while directly affecting a number of countries, have shaken us all equally. They not only mark a new era in international security, introducing a new dimension with regard to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, but they also pose new challenges for the work of the First Committee and for the entire disarmament machinery. Now more than ever, we are convinced that fighting terrorism requires activity by each of our countries, complemented by multilateral action, in which both regional and global bodies have a fundamental role to play.

Thus, the resolutions that have been adopted on the recommendation of the First Committee and the legal instruments that have been adopted within the United Nations represent now, more than ever, a means by which States may collectively address this new international reality in an effective way. Not only must we preserve our achievements in the area of disarmament, but we must also enhance and strengthen them by means of universal membership and implementation.

We are aware of the momentum gained by the efforts towards revitalization made at the last session of the General Assembly as well as the new practical measures that those efforts have begun to generate. We have thus been studying various proposals to improve the functioning of the First Committee, and we welcome the gradual implementation of changes on which consensus exists. Nevertheless, we believe that the nature of the First Committee should not change, since this is the most appropriate and most representative international forum on disarmament and security issues. What we can and must do is strengthen the Committee.

In this respect, bearing in mind the benefits that accrue from collective action, we should concentrate our efforts on the implementation of our resolutions and on ensuring that they are fulfilled. This could be the result of supplementing follow-up mechanisms with the political will necessary to fulfil them. Any change we are willing to make in the Committee will have repercussions for the two other essential components of multilateral disarmament: the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission. Hence, the interrelationship among disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation requires that the sphere of our activities be centred on a preponderant role for United Nations.

Before concluding I should like to refer briefly to two specific issues that are of particular importance to our delegation. First, we reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and of the provisions of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We shall thus continue to move ahead in the implementation of their programmes at the national level. We welcome the holding of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention to be held next week in Nairobi, Kenya, and of the second biennial meeting for the implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms, to be held in July 2005 in New York.

Secondly, we wish to emphasize the importance of our recently created National Disarmament

Commission, whose main objective is to implement a national disarmament programme, coordinating the activities of a variety of actors in order to lower the incidence of armed violence, make weapons and ammunition less available and make people aware of the evil effects of weapons. Another fundamental function of the commission is to serve as the national organ responsible for ensuring regulatory compliance, carrying out investigations and supervising initiatives for combating illicit trafficking. It also aims to be the international point of contact for disarmament issues.

This session marks the beginning of a busy year in the area of disarmament. The Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons and the First Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms will provide an opportunity to find new ways of countering the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Furthermore the forthcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT will give us an opportunity to reaffirm our determination to prevent the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons, with an unequivocal commitment to eliminate them. This is becoming ever more important now that the issue of terrorism is at the top of the global security agenda and that there is an unprecedented possibility of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorists. Let us use this opportunity to send a clear, principled message affirming our commitment to make progress in the areas of disarmament and international security.

Agenda item 109

Programme planning

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite the Secretary of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Movses Abelian, to brief us on agenda item 109 with respect to the proposed strategic framework and, specifically, on its consideration by the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

Mr. Abelian (Secretary of the Fifth Committee): Upon your request, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the First Committee I should like to provide some clarification on agenda item 109, "Programme Planning". At the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly this agenda item has been allocated to the First Committee based on the mandates of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. In its resolution 54/236 of 1999 the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, which recommended that the specialized agencies, the Economic and Social Council and the Main Committees of the General Assembly should include in their programme of work an item on programme planning for the review of the proposed medium-term plan and its revisions. Subsequently, at the fifty-seventh session, the General Assembly in its resolution 57/282 reiterated its view that the relevant intergovernmental bodies, as well as the Economic and Social Council and the Main Committees, should include in their programmes of work a review of recommendations of the Committee on Programme and Coordination relevant to their work and take appropriate action.

As members know, last year, at the fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly, acting on the proposal of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the United Nations agenda for change, decided to request the Secretary-General to prepare, on a trial basis, for submission to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, a strategic framework to replace the current four-year medium-term plan, which would comprise two parts: part A, a plan outline reflecting the longer term objectives of the Organization, and part B, a biennial programme plan which covers only two years.

At its forty-fourth session the Committee for Programme and Coordination, which works on the basis of consensus, was not able to reach a consensus on the programme of disarmament. The General Assembly, based on the recommendation of the Committee on Programme and Coordination, upon the decision of the General Committee, allocated the programme on disarmament of the strategic framework to the First Committee for its review and action and subsequent submission to the Fifth Committee for its consideration of the strategic framework for the period 2006-2007. The General Assembly allocated relevant programmes not only to the First Committee. It allocated programmes to other Main Committees as well. For example, the programme on trade and development has been allocated to the Second Committee; the programme on human rights allocated to the Third Committee; and the programme on public information has been allocated to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

In accordance with the rules of programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation it is up to the General Assembly — in this case, up to the First Committee — to accept, to curtail, to reformulate or to reject the strategic framework proposed by the Secretary-General. The medium-term plan — or, as we call it now, the strategic framework — is the translation of legislative mandates into programmes and subprogrammes. Its objectives and strategies are derived from policy orientations and goals set by the intergovernmental bodies and reflect the priorities of Member States set out in the legislation — in this case First Committee resolutions. Priorities established in the medium-term plan or strategic framework shall guide the allocation of budgetary and extrabudgetary resources in the subsequent programme budgets.

Consideration of the medium-term plan by the First Committee is not new. The last time the First Committee had the issue before it was at the fifty-fifth session, when the General Assembly was considering the current medium-term plan for 2002-2005. At the fifty-fifth session, the First Committee took note of the medium-term plan on the programme of disarmament and endorsed the recommendation of the Committee on Programme and Coordination subsequently transmitted to the Fifth Committee. This time, the difference is that, as I said, the Committee on Programme and Coordination was not able to reach a consensus. So there is a proposal by the Secretary-General, contained in document A/59/6 (Programme 3), and there is a chapter of the report of the Committee on Programme and Coordination (A/59/16) relevant to the programme on disarmament, which includes a section on the Committee's discussion and also relevant proposals that were prepared by member States during the Committee's deliberations. But none of those proposals were endorsed by the Committee.

Because the Committee on Programme and Coordination is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, it is now up to the First Committee to consider the Secretary-General's proposed strategic framework on disarmament, look at the proposals, accept, reject or modify them and come up with a final product. The action of the First Committee will be final, because the Fifth Committee is not going to reopen anything once it has been endorsed by the First Committee.

Procedurally, the Committee will have before it the two documents I mentioned: A/59/6 (Programme 3) and A/59/16. There will be an introduction by the programme manager of the disarmament programme. Officials of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and of the Programme Planning and Budget Division will be here to assist the Committee in its deliberations and in achieving a final result.

I am prepared to answer any questions that members may have.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Before proceeding, let me note that the Chair intends to take up this matter in due detail at a future meeting.

Now, I would ask all members to look at the documents mentioned by the Secretary of the Fifth Committee: A/59/6 (Programme 3), which contains the Secretary-General's proposed strategic framework; and A/59/16, the report of the Committee on Programme and Coordination, containing recommendations and suggestions made by a number of members of that Committee. When we consider the Secretary-General's proposals and any suggestions about modifying or amending them — bearing in mind that there was no consensus in the Committee on Programme and Coordination — we will be able to engage in a detailed review of each one and approve or reject it. That will ultimately yield a consensus on a proposed strategic framework. I think this will require a special effort and numerous consultations; I shall be involved in some of them, the Vice-Chairmen in others. I just want to stress that this is an important exercise.

We are pleased to have the Secretary of the Fifth Committee with us, and I call on any members who wish to ask him any preliminary or general questions that might help us in addressing this issue.

Mr. Umer (Pakistan): We agree that this is an extremely important matter, particularly in the light of the fact that the Committee for Programme and Coordination — for the first time ever, I believe — was unable to reach agreement on the strategic framework for 2006-2007. The documents now before us were circulated only very recently, so I think it would be appropriate if you, Sir, convened a meeting so that we could have a good and full discussion.

I have one small query for the Secretariat. Paragraph 89 of document A/59/16 tell us that "The following amendments were proposed to programme 3, Disarmament". Who proposed the amendments? Were they proposed by countries, and, if so, which

countries? They should be listed so that we know. Who was the author of the amendments? Or were the amendments proposed by the Secretariat in the light of the discussion that took place in the Committee on Programme and Coordination? Could the Secretary of the Fifth Committee, or anyone else, enlighten us on this important matter?

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the Secretary of the Fifth Committee.

Mr. Abelian (Secretary of the Fifth Committee): The amendments set out in paragraph 89 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/59/16) were proposed by Member States. In accordance with the Committee's working methods, its members did not ask for identification of the authors of the amendments when they were having informal consultations. Sometimes, a member State would ask who the author was, when an author country introduced an amendment and negotiations were taking place. Of course, the Secretariat's Programme Planning and Budget Division has the information on who the authors are, but it is up to the First Committee, in conformity with its own working methods, to list the names of those countries when it holds its discussions or to go along with the working methods followed by the Committee on Programme and Coordination.

These are all proposals submitted by Member States. The Secretariat's original proposal is the Secretary-General's proposed strategic framework contained in document A/59/6. All the proposals in paragraph 89 of document A/59/16, I believe, are proposals by Member States.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I do indeed intend to hold a meeting on this matter, as the representative of Pakistan requested, either next week or a little later, once we have made some progress in preliminary consultations. These consultations are important; I think it would be a good idea for delegations to look both at the initial proposal of the Secretary-General and at the amendments — irrespective of their origin. Delegations that made proposals in the Committee on Programme and Coordination could either repeat them or set them aside. We need to begin this exercise from the particular angle of the First Committee without necessarily continuing the discussion that was begun in the Committee on Programme and Coordination. At any rate, all delegations that are members of the Committee on Programme and Coordination — including my own — will be able to review their positions and to repeat them here if the case arises.

In the absence of objection, I shall take it that members consider that to be an appropriate procedure. As soon as we identify the proper time for a meeting on this item, we shall inform members, on the understanding that it will probably be held next week.

I thank the Secretary of the Fifth Committee for his presence and for the information he has given us and I shall take up his offer that both the Department for Disarmament Affairs — whose Under-Secretary-General is here — and the Programme Planning and Budget Division will help representatives once we start our in-depth consideration of proposed amendments.

Administrative matters

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): As we have now gone into administrative matters, I believe that we could also take advantage of the presence of a representative of the United Nations Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts to have a brief presentation on the process of preparing statements of the programme budget implications of draft resolutions. Programme budget implications have frequently been a cause of delay in our work, which is why I believe it is important to have a clear idea of how they are prepared so that they can be prepared in a timely way.

I stress that it is not my intention to open a discussion on administrative and budgetary matters here. Our job is to analyse the substantive aspect of a proposal and the Fifth Committee's to analyse its implications for the United Nations budget. But better knowledge of those implications can influence negotiations; and that is we need the proper information.

I now call on Mr. Dennis Thatchaichawalit of the Programme Planning and Budget Division of the Office for Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, to make a presentation on this subject.

Mr. Thatchaichawalit: The basis for the statement of programme budget implications (PBIs) is founded in the provisions of rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which provides that no draft resolution involving expenditure shall be recommended by a Main Committee for approval by

the General Assembly unless it is accompanied by an estimate of expenditures prepared by the Secretary-General. Thus, when a Main Committee is taking up a draft resolution involving expenditures or financial implications, the Secretariat submits to the Main Committee a statement of programme budget implications informing the Committee of any financial implications resulting from the action requested in the draft resolution.

The second part of rule 153 provides that no draft resolution in respect of which expenditures are anticipated by the Secretariat shall be voted upon by the General Assembly until the Administrative and Budgetary Committee, which is the Fifth Committee, has had an opportunity of stating the effect of the proposal upon the budget estimates of the United Nations. Accordingly, after the adoption of the draft resolution by the Main Committee, the statement of programme budget implications would be submitted to the Fifth Committee through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). The role of the Fifth Committee there is to review the budgetary implications and then to inform the plenary General Assembly of the effect of the draft resolution on United Nations budget estimates.

With the decision by the Fifth Committee the plenary General Assembly is in a position to take the necessary action on the draft resolution recommended by the Main Committee, taking into account the recommendation of the Fifth Committee. Those are the basic procedures in relation to PBIs. I would be pleased to answer any specific questions that Committee members may have.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on those delegations that have questions on this procedure.

Mr. Umer (Pakistan): I am sorry to speak again, but the information provided by the Secretariat raises an important question. If a draft resolution that has financial implications is adopted in this Committee, by implication it would seem that the programme budget implications (PBIs) are also approved by this Committee. According to the information given by the Secretariat, these PBIs go to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and then to the Fifth Committee. Is the Fifth Committee in a position to override the decision of another Main Committee of the General Assembly? What is the legal authority of the Fifth Committee in terms of a PBI that has been approved by another Main Committee?

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): The rules of procedure regarding programme budget implications (PBIs) are very explicit, and we know that. However, it seems from the experience of last year not only in this Committee, but particularly in another Committee — that the content of the presentation of the PBI prepared by the Secretariat is sometimes problematic. Could we have a brief description of the guidelines and format that the Secretariat maintains in presenting PBIs. If we have this, we can reduce the controversy that exists. Last year it was not as bad in the First Committee as in other Committees, but such a description might help us during our discussions and consultations with respect to PBIs so that we can avoid controversy at the end of our work.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of the Secretariat to reply to the questions that have been raised.

Mr. Thatchaichawallt: On the first question, concerning the programme budget implications (PBI) issued to a Main Committee, indeed the Main Committee adopts its draft resolution. Technically, the PBI is there to inform the Main Committee of the financial implications of its decision. As the rules of procedure make it clear, all administrative and financial matters fall within the purview of the Fifth Committee. That is why the latter part of rule 153 requires that any decision to be adopted by the plenary General Assembly which has financial implications has to be reviewed by the Fifth Committee.

In effect, if the First Committee adopts a draft resolution, the draft resolution will stay as it is as a substantive decision. But at the same time, according to rule 153, the Secretariat will have to submit the statement of programme budget implications through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to the Fifth Committee for its review. Of course the Fifth Committee is in a position, as on any other budgetary issue, to take its own decision — let us say, to overrule what is in the original PBI just as it might do with respect to any other budgetary proposal. So it is still in the hands of the Fifth Committee to take a decision on a budgetary matter. Then with the decision of the Fifth Committee, together with the draft resolution initiated by another

Main Committee, the General Assembly would take a decision on the draft resolution itself.

At the same time, in terms of the budgetary requirements of decisions taken by the Fifth Committee, the decision is taken by the Fifth Committee in the context of the programme budget of the relevant biennium. For example, at the current session, which is halfway through the biennium 2004-2005, the Fifth Committee would make a decision at the end of the session on the level of the revised appropriation for the biennium 2004-2005. In that context, it would take into account the first budget performance report of the biennium to be submitted by the Secretariat during the latter part of the session and would also take into account all the PBIs from the various Main Committees and all the relevant revised estimates. An example would be a revised estimate resulting from a decision or resolution by the Economic and Social Council. So the Fifth Committee would take all those elements into account in arriving at the level of the revised appropriation, which is then recommended to the plenary Assembly for adoption.

That is the budgetary side of the process. The process on the substantive side would still proceed, and a draft resolution from a Main Committee would remain intact with the information that the Committee is indeed taking a decision with complete information in terms of financial implications.

The other question related to the contents of the PBI. For PBIs, as for any other budgetary documents, we have a standard format for the relevant paragraph in a draft resolution that involves financial implications. In the PBI we would also list the programme implications in terms of necessary changes resulting from the draft resolution with respect to the programmatic part of the programme budget. We would then show the financial implications, including whether there are requirements for staff resources, for consultants or for travel. There would also be a portion for the possibility of absorption within the current programme budget. The final paragraph would be a recommendation noting that there would be a certain level of financial implications, and indicating whether we would require additional appropriation or not. That basically is the standard format of a PBI statement.

Mr. Umer (Pakistan): I do not want to belabour this point, but the information given by the Secretariat raises a fundamental question. Let us assume that the First Committee adopts a draft resolution which has budgetary implications of, let us say, $50,000. According to the procedures spelled out by the Secretariat, the statement of programme budget implications goes to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and to the Fifth Committee. Let us assume that the Fifth Committee decides that the money is not available. What happens then? Is it possible for a resolution to be prevented from being implemented because of its budgetary implications? Has this ever happened before in the United Nations system?

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to make an observation. First, it is my understanding that the famous statements of programme budget implications (PBIs) that are distributed in the Main Committees, including the First Committee, are merely for information. I should like to confirm this. It is not for the Committee to approve them. I also understand that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions is not the sole body that can review the implications of PBIs; the Fifth Committee, especially, does so as well. I understand that at the end of the exercise, towards the end of the session, the Fifth Committee studies the PBIs of all Main Committees and carries out an exercise involving negotiations, with a view to absorbing as many as possible into the regular budget and, if necessary, to agree on any increases.

I do not think it is necessary to go into further detail, but I should like to ask the representative of the Secretariat to confirm my understanding because, as the representative of Pakistan has pointed out, it is important that we understand that the Committee is empowered to adopt substantive issues and that the Fifth Committee is in charge of identifying resources. If resources do not exist, the Fifth Committee in one way or the other needs to make the situation clear to all Member States so that decisions taken by a principal organ will not fail to be implemented. But we also need to be realistic and to be aware that, to a large extent, this results from a zero-growth budgetary policy and would not arise if the budget could be increased in a significant way.

I call once again on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Thatchaichawalit: You have made my job much easier, Mr. Chairman. I think you addressed all

the questions that have been asked. I just want to add that, in arriving at its decision on the level of the budget, the Fifth Committee has the advantage, as you, Sir, mentioned, of looking at all the statements of programme budget implications (PBIs) emanating from the various Main Committees and legislative bodies. Thus, it takes a decision on the level of the budget as a whole and not on any particular draft resolution or decision. It also has an opportunity to see whether, with all the competing requirements, there might be some areas where there could be alternative solutions. Last year, for example, a number of PBIs involved additional requirements for conference services. When the Fifth Committee actually made the decision on those PBIs, both the Secretariat and the Fifth Committee were in a much better position to determine the overall conference-servicing requirements for the year 2004-2005, given that by the end of the session it had all the requirements. Both the Secretariat and the Fifth Committee were then in a better position to see whether there are areas that could be absorbed, or areas that could be met within the existing requirements.

The Committee can also rest assured that the decision of the Fifth Committee on the level of the budget does not block the implementation of a decision taken by a Main Committee. As I mentioned earlier, the intention of the statement of programme budget implications is to inform the Committees of financial implications, but how a decision is funded is determined by the Fifth Committee. Of course, the Secretariat would have the obligation to implement a decision taken by a Main Committee as ultimately adopted by the plenary Assembly.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I propose that we leave this issue pending for the time being. I assure members that the Chair will continue to make inquiries in order to respond to the concern expressed by the representative of Pakistan and to identify what the situation has been in the past and whether any mandates have not been financed. I believe that this would be important if, for instance, we were going to review the implementation of the Committee's recommendations and decisions. This is an important matter which we need to consider: it is not enough to agree on a course of action; we also need to make sure that adequate financial resources exist.

I should like to repeat my call to all delegations that will be submitting draft resolutions that might have budgetary or financial implications to consult the Secretariat as soon as possible so that when the time comes we will not have delays on the statements of programme budget implications (PBIs). I also wish to ask the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts to work on the PBIs in a more expeditious manner. I know that we have had difficulties with some draft resolutions in the past because the budget Office was overloaded with work or because there was a lack of clarity between the provisions of a draft resolution and the Secretariat's understanding of them.

I invite everybody to have a more open dialogue that will yield a quicker response to a request for a PBI. It is also important that PBIs be explained in greater detail, especially when they are formulated on the basis of total cost and do not take account of possible resources from various existing budget lines or other sources. That is an exercise that I am sure the Secretariat ought to carry out, because if a decision is budgeted in terms of total cost — taking into account such things as power and room costs — we would obviously see inflated figures. Although it is the Secretariat's job to give us all the figures, a balance must be struck between the real costs and the total costs.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the Secretary of the Fifth Committee and the representative of the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts for the information they have provided us.

I now call on the Secretary of the First Committee.

Ms. Stoute (Secretary of the First Committee): I should like to give members the name of the budget officer who deals with disarmament. She is Ms. Sheryl Simmons, and her telephone number is (212) 963-8230. She has said that if members have any questions they should please feel free to phone her.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.